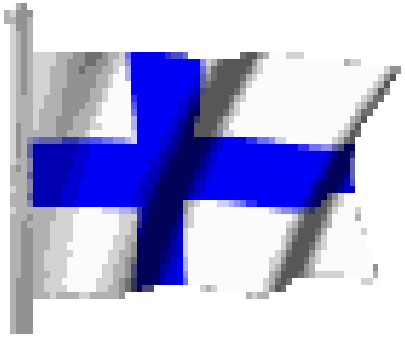
TRAVELER'S BRIEFING



FINLAND

(Suomen Tasavalta)

© 1988-1999 Microsoft and/or its suppliers. All rights reserved.

BACKGROUND

Full Name: Republic of Finland

Capital: Helsinki

Population: 5,158,372 (est)

Type of government: Republic

Head of government: PM Paavo Lippone

Official language(s) Finnish, Swedish

Economy: Free-market economy

Religions: Evangelical Lutheran (89%)

TRAVEL

Travel restrictions: There are no restrictions for transient personnel, except a zone l/2 to 3 miles wide along the Russian Federation border.

International Airport: Helsinki

Flights from Frankfurt: Finnair

Other methods of arrival: Ship/road/rail

U.S. Embassy address: Itainen Puistotie 14A, Helsinki Tel: 358-9-171931; FAX: 358-9-171396 E-mail

Transportation: Public transportation: Excellent.

Urban Roads/Maintenance: Excellent.

Rural roads/Maintenance: Excellent.

Availability of roadside assistance: Excellent. Finland has an extensive network of highways throughout the country, as well as excellent public transportation services.

©Anita Nuopponen

ENTRY/EXIT

Travel Necessities: Military personnel on leave require passport. Military ID cards are not sufficient for entry into Finland. Civilian personnel (including dependents) require passports. A visa is not required for stays of 90 days or less. Visas are required if staying more than 90 days. The 90-day period begins when entering Scandinavian area (Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, and/or Iceland.). Contract personnel who plan to work in Finland over 90 days must apply for Finnish labor permit before arrival.

Customs, immigration, and quarantine inspection is required. Immigration inspector checks and stamps passports on entry and departure. Entry and departure cards must be completed.

Duty-free entry for used personal effects: camera and film, jewelry, portable typewriter, cigarette lighter, electric razor, record player and records, three pairs new nylon hose, 30 cigars or l00 cigarettes or l00 grams of tobacco, and one liter of liquor in opened container.Personal luggage may be

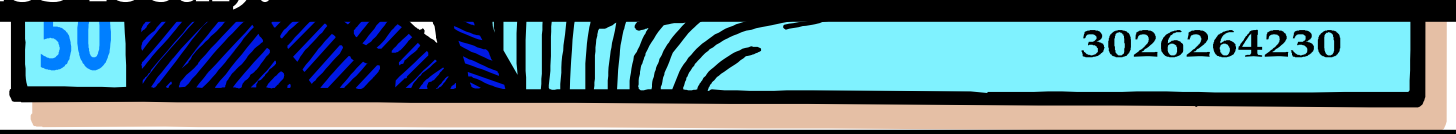
HELPFUL HINTS

Special restrictions: Finland is a highly developed democracy with a modern economy. It is a member of the European Union. Tourist facilities are widely available. It is very difficult to obtain lodging l May-30 Sep. The use of cameras is restricted on airports, in flight, and near border areas. Firearms must be declared. Customs will hold firearms until police permit is issued. Unconsumed imports are required to be in traveler's possession on departure; they may not be sold or given away. Military personnel on leave with Finnish

Amembassy operating hours are 0830-1700L Mon-Fri. Offices are closed on weekends and US holidays, plus the following Finnish holidays: Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day, Midsummer's Eve (late June), Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Second Christmas Day (26 Dec).

MONEY

Currency restrictions: Currency must be declared and records kept for check on leaving. There is no limit on import of foreign currency or travelers checks. There is a limit of 20,000 markka for import and l0,000 markka for export. Import or export of 500 markka notes is prohibited Currency may be exchanged at banks or major hotels. One half of the amount exchanged may be reconverted if the receipt for the original transaction can be shown. Helsinki airport bank is open 0715-l900 every day. At other airports the hours are l000-l530 weekdays (l June-3l Aug, l000-l500) and l000-l300 Saturday (all times local).



Rate: Approximate: 6.22 Finnish Markka for $1.

HEALTH

Major threats: diarrhea, respiratory diseases, accidents, arthropod-borne diseases, STDs, cold injuries, and industrial pollution.
Availability of medical services: Good. The public hospital system and many private hospitals honor foreign credit cards.

Medical Insurance: May not apply in Finland.

Status of hospitals: Good.

Health Precautions: None.

Immunizations: Hep A (recommended), Hep B (recommended), TB (recommended) MMR (recommended) and tetanus-disptheria boosters (recommended). Personnel who are sensitive to immunizing agents may be granted a waiver if they have a valid certificate attesting to the fact or if examination by a doctor at the port of entry proves sensitivity.

FORCE PROTECTION

Country Clearance: Required for all military personnel traveling toFinland. You obtain this by going through your S3/G3 section. This must be done at least 30 days ahead of scheduled visit. DV visits will also be coordinated through G3/S3 channels.

Briefings: AT/FP level I brief from command's Level II trainer or equivalent.

Driving regulations and traffic signs differ significantly from those in the United States. Visitors should be familiar with both prior to operating a vehicle in Finland. Driving in Finland during the winter months can be hazardous. Icy road conditions are common. Vehicles are required to be winterized and have studded snow tires, and engine heaters are strongly recommended. When driving at night, drivers must be alert to moose wandering onto major roadways. There have been incidents of moose being struck by vehicles, causing severe damage to the vehicle and even death to the occupants.

CRIME

Criminal Activities: Although the crime rate in Finland is low compared to the U.S. and most European countries, it has increased approximately 15 percent since 1998. However, Finland remains relatively safe. Americans visiting Finland are seldom victims of crime, but visitors should not be complacent regarding personal safety or the protection of valuables. The same precautions employed in the U.S. should be followed in Finland. Finnish police services are excellent; however, some police officers speak little English. The telephone number for police and other emergency services throughout Finland is 112. All forms of public transportation are considered safe. Street crimes such as muggings and pickpocketing remain relatively uncommon, but they do occur.

Finland is strict on: Drunkeness. Avoid "noisiness," particularly in public areas. Travelers should be aware that drunk driving laws are strict, and acceptable blood alcohol levels are much lower in Finland than in the United States. Those drivers who register a .05 or above alcohol content are

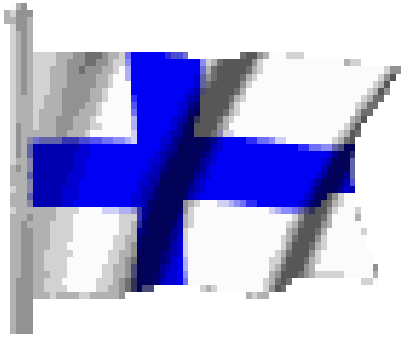
WEATHER

http://cnn

CLOTHING

Uniform restrictions: Uniforms are prohibited. Clothing suitable for New England weather is recommended.

This concludes the TRAVELER'S BRIEFING for



FINLAND